

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 PM by the Chairman, Mr. Carpender, and the following members were present:

Mr. Richard Carpender, Chair
Ms. Sylvia Wedge, Vice Chair

Ms. Marilyn King
Mrs. Marge Levesque, Clerk
Mr. Michael Buddemeyer

Mrs. Cynthia Perrotti
Ms. Angela Volpicelli

Also Present: Dr. Lusi, Asst. Supt. Jermain, Patti Cofield, Rick Updegrove

A motion was made by Ms. Wedge and seconded by Ms. Levesque to adjourn to Executive Session pursuant to R.I. Law 42-46-5, Exceptions (a)(1) Job Performance/Personnel Matters, (a)(2) Collective Bargaining and/or Litigation; or (a)(8) Student Discipline. So voted 7-0.

Public Session recessed at 6:31 PM and resumed at 7:00 PM.

1. **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**: Mr. Carpender announced that an Executive Session was held prior to this meeting regarding a collective bargaining and/or litigation matter. No motions were made, and no votes were taken. A motion was made by Ms. Wedge and seconded by Mrs. Levesque to seal the minutes of the Executive Session. So voted 7-0.
2. **SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT**: Dr. Lusi reported that she and Assistant Superintendent Jermain attended a meeting of the Aquidneck Island Group. RIPEC informed the group that their report is still in draft form, but they are getting closer to completing it. They hope to have all the data by Friday, and then they'll let the group know their timeline. It somewhat depends on what the General Assembly needs from them.
 - a) **Teaching and Learning**: No Report.
 - b) **Finance and Operations**: Absent

Ms. Wedge announced that the Post Prom Party was being held at the Elks Club in Newport and that the Post Prom Committee is seeking donations from the public.

3. **BUSINESS AGENDA**

Mr. Carpender stated that he was reversing the order of the items on the Business Agenda.

- b) **Discussion/Action – 2009-10 School Department Budget**. Dr. Lusi gave an update on where we are as of today on our budget gap. When we reported to the Town Council on May 13th, our remaining total gap to fill in our budget was \$353,079. We then also told the Council of a potential new gap of \$387,000 in the Regional Special Education assessment. Progress we've made since identifying the \$353,079 gap includes a savings of \$69,000 in our new oil bid, and a savings of \$10,000 in Workers' Compensation costs

as a result of the Trust having a very good year overall, which reduced our cost. If the Special Education gap was removed, our gap would be decreased to \$274,079. Dr. Lusi stated that she and Mrs. Jermain met with our Regional Special Education Director, Trish Martins, and a member of the RIDE Special Education office staff with regard to the IDEA stimulus money. Fifteen percent comes off the top to be used for Early Intervention services, and that represents \$49,000. There is also a private school share with IDEA money and all federal funds, which is approximately \$15,000. The readjusted gap totals approximately \$366,000

Discussion continued regarding the budget. Mrs. Perrotti stated that she couldn't find at-will employees on the budget sheets. Dr. Lusi explained that the slides on the budget gap do not list the savings by budget line item. For example, at will employees fall under more than one salary line item. Mrs. Perrotti inquired about several different line items in the budget, and Mr. Carpender stated that she could meet with Dr. Lusi and/or Ms. Tague separately to discuss the budget in detail.

- a) **Discussion/Action – Delaying the Closing of Prudence Island School.** Mr. Carpender stated that at the last meeting, a motion was made to further delay the closing of Prudence Island school for one year, only if \$44,000 was received from the Town of Portsmouth. Some consideration was given to certain line items in the budget, and then the discussion centered on whether or not the \$17,000 in the fund balance could be used for Prudence Island School. Mr. Carpender indicated that he could support that, but he'd have to present it to the School Committee. If that were the case, the Council stated that they would leave \$27,000. A motion to that effect was made by the Council but failed 4-3. Discussion ensued with the Council, and they suggested that the Committee revisits the \$17,000 and takes another bite at the apple by relooking at the proposed budget. Mr. Carpender stated that he did not support the Committee relooking at our budget and making adjustments, seeing as we already have an existing gap. Mr. Buddemeyer stated that the bucket is springing leaks, the number is heading in the wrong direction, and we simply don't have the money to allocate to Prudence Island School. He would look favorably at using the \$17,000 fund balance, and he would entertain that motion. Mr. Carpender stated that the Committee sent a motion over to the Town Council that is still in effect; but if a member wanted to reconsider or amend that motion, he would entertain a motion to reconsider.

Mrs. Perrotti made a motion to reconsider the prior motion to further delay the closing of Prudence Island School for one year, only if \$44,000 was received from the Town. Seconded by Mr. Buddemeyer. So voted 7-0. Discussion ensued regarding the budget, and various line items were questioned by Mrs. Perrotti. Dr. Lusi stated the Committee and Administration spent 3 to 4 months going through the budget process, and all of the numbers presented were estimates. The documents discussed at each Finance Subcommittee meeting are available to the public on the School Department's website. She stated that if the Committee and community are adamant about keeping Prudence

Island School open, then there are no popular ways to cut the budget. It appears to her that getting a charter for the Prudence Island School is unlikely. She stated that the staff's time in this system is one of our biggest assets; we have spent weeks of human hours on the Prudence issue, and we went through the entire budget process. She asked that the Committee considers the investment of time and the opportunity cost attached and the fact that things are going to get worse instead of better financially.

Mrs. Volpicelli made a motion that the Committee obtains \$24,000 from the tuition that would have been paid to Bristol-Warren, \$17,000 from the 2008 fund balance, and \$3,000 in savings from the attendance officer, totaling \$44,000, to allow Prudence Island School to stay open for another year. Seconded by Mrs. King. Mrs. Perrotti stated that the \$24,000 could not be contributed to the pot because it was already removed from the equation to get to the \$44,000 amount. Dr. Lusi stated that we are legally required to have an attendance officer, so there wouldn't be a savings there. Those responsibilities were added to the Assistant Principal's job by the Committee, along with a \$3,000 stipend, because we have had a very hard time filling that position externally. Mrs. Levesque stated that she was going to vote against the motion because we do not take things out of a budget we have already voted on. She stated that the only way she will support a motion to keep Prudence Island School open is if the money comes from the Town Council, or at least a portion of it. Mrs. Perrotti amended the motion to be \$17,000 from the 2008 fund balance, \$5,616 in estimated ferry costs, \$8,190 from Line 56800 School Committee Expenses for honoring retirees; and \$5,000 from Line 5220 Retirees Certified, totaling \$35,806. This motion does not include the attendance officer. Seconded by Mrs. Volpicelli. Mr. Carpenter stated that he would not vote for a motion that is taking money out of a line item when there is still a gap in the budget. The amended motion failed 3-4. Mr. Buddemeyer, Mrs. Levesque, Mr. Carpenter, and Ms Wedge were opposed. The main motion failed 1-6. Mrs. Volpicelli voted in favor.

Mr. Carpenter stated that our motion from the other night was to keep Prudence Island School open for one year, only if the additional revenue of \$44,000 is provided by the Town. He stated that we talked about the \$17,000 fund balance, which left \$27,000. The Town Council wanted some agreement from the Committee that if there is an additional \$27,000 over and above the original \$40,000, that we would repay the Town. Dr. Lusi stated that the motion on May 4th was to review the budget to come up with another \$40,000; and Mr. Carpenter stated that this would be \$27,000 over that, totaling \$67,000. Ms. Wedge made a motion to keep Prudence Island School open for one additional year, only if the Town Council funds the \$27,000, using the \$17,000 fund balance; and we would agree to pay back the \$27,000 if we have a fund balance at the end of the 2008-09 year. Seconded by Mrs. Levesque. Mrs. Perrotti stated that she is not in favor of asking the Town to pay for it. Mr. Carpenter pointed out that the Town Council is the one who stated that we couldn't close it; and in the spirit of cooperation, if they want us to keep it

open, they need to help us. Mrs. Levesque amended the motion to reflect that the \$27,000 should be from the “audited” 2008-09 fund balance. Seconded by Mrs. King. So voted 6-1. Mrs. Perrotti voted against. The main motion as amended was approved 6-1. Mrs. Perrotti voted against.

A motion was made by Ms. Wedge and seconded by Mrs. Levesque to adjourn the meeting. So voted 7-0. The meeting adjourned at 8:43 PM.

Respectfully submitted:

Patti Cofield
Recording Secretary for:

Marge Levesque, Clerk